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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2009

In Today's Papers

Mubarak Lauds Turkey's 'Supportive Stance' on Arab Issues  
Media outlets report President Abdullah Gul and visiting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Wednesday to discuss Middle East peace in Istanbul's Ciragan Palace.  
Mainstream Hurriyet reports that during a joint press avail with Gul after the meeting, Mubarak "did not even utter the name of Hamas." Mubarak said the sole legitimate representative of Palestine was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Papers report that in their meeting, a "roadmap" was drawn for Palestine, which aims for a lasting ceasefire to be followed by securing unity among the Palestinian groups and rebuilding Gaza. Mubarak said Egypt backed Turkey's role in the region, and praised "Turkey's supportive stance regarding the Arab issues." "Next month in Cairo, we will host an international conference for raising funds for Gaza's reconstruction," said Mubarak.

Meanwhile, a group of about 200 demonstrators rallied in Taksim in the heart of Istanbul, protesting the visit of Mubarak. The protestors also called for the opening of Rafah border crossing.

Erdogan: My Davos Message Found its Place in Israel  
Media outlets report Prime Minister Erdogan, in Kastamonu yesterday for his party's municipal elections campaign, said on the outcome of the Israeli elections that "the message he gave in Davos found its place in Israel." Erdogan did not elaborate further on how the Israeli election results prove that his message "found its place." "We always do what is best for Turkey's honor; we did it before and we can do it today and tomorrow," said Erdogan.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Israel

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "The results of the Israeli elections do not give any hope for peace in the foreseeable future. As for the other key players in the region, Egypt has lost its significance while Turkey remains objective and more welcoming by people in the region. Ankara will undoubtedly play its role, whether it as mediator or go-between, according to the situation."

Kadri Gursel wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "PM Erdogan talked about redefining terrorism at the Davos conference, but we are still waiting for some elaboration of this. Given the U.S. official definition of terrorism as well as PM Erdogan's Hamas rhetoric, it is very obvious that Erdogan was implying the acceptance of Hamas as a legitimate resistance movement as opposed to a terror organization. His wish will not come true because stretching the definition of terrorism can not do any good for Hamas who is not only responsible for military attacks but also responsible for civilian killings. PM Erdogan needs to clarify his intentions on this as soon as possible before further negative speculations begin."

Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in tabloid Posta: "As expected, the Gaza issue has become an internal political propaganda item and those who exploited it during the election campaign have become winners. However, the current election results will not take Israeli politics further than coalition governments. Israel will not be capable of acting arbitrarily any more, even though hawkish figures remain powerful. Unconditional U.S. support for Israel can no longer be taken for granted, especially with the new Obama administration. Turkey, on the other hand, has great capability to communicate and collaborate with all players in the Middle East issue, including Washington."

#### EP Committee Approves Turkey Draft Report

All papers report the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee has approved a draft report on Turkey, in which the EU welcomes Turkey's new National Program, the launch of broadcasts in the Kurdish language, and appointment of Egemen Bagis as the chief

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EU negotiator. Oomen-Ruijten, EU's Turkey rapporteur, urged Turkey for "new systemic reforms." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says the report asks the Turkish government to work in close cooperation with the judiciary regarding the Islamist-oriented Deniz Feneri scandal in Germany. "The report criticizes PM Erdogan for targeting the Turkish media, but welcomes the trial of the suspects in the Ergenekon case," says Cumhuriyet. The report calls on Turkish authorities to inspect more closely the claims of links between the Ergenekon network and the assassination of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink. It also underlines the problems Alevis face, and adds that politicians should be allowed to use the Kurdish language in election campaigns, say papers.

#### Azerbaijan's Air Force Commander Shot Dead in Baku

Papers report the commander of Azerbaijan's air force was gunned down outside his Baku home yesterday. Lt. Gen. Rail Rzayev was "shot in the head, and died in a military hospital in Baku shortly thereafter." Experts said the killing may be linked to Rzayev's role in the large-scale military acquisitions Azerbaijan has made in recent years. Commentators point out that the assassination happened on the eve of Azerbaijani-Armenian negotiations on the controversial issue of Nagorno-Karabakh.

#### 'Kadiri' Sect Leader Joins CHP

Media outlets report Abdul Hafiz Aydin, one of the leaders of the "Kadiri" religious order, joined Wednesday the opposition CHP at the party's branch office in Istanbul's conservative district Sultanbeyli. Papers claim Aydin would be bringing 30,000 votes with him. "Kadiri" is a Sufi religious order founded by Abdulkadir Geylani (1077-1166), and has many followers in Egypt, Iraq and Turkey.

#### Survey: 39 Percent of Married Women Suffer from Domestic Violence

Mainstream Hurriyet reports State Minister for women, Nimet Cubukcu, disclosed at a press briefing Thursday new research on "female victims of domestic violence." According to the survey, which was conducted in 51 Turkish provinces by canvassing the view of 12,795 women, 39 percent of women were subjected to physical violence by their current or former husbands. The physical violence rate stands at 38 percent in cities, and 43 percent in rural areas. 41.9 percent of women say they have suffered from physical violence coupled with sexual violence. 48.5 percent say they could not tell anyone about the abuse. One out of every ten women has been subjected to physical violence during their pregnancy, and 92

percent did not apply to authorities after facing abuse, according to the survey.

#### Division in Sabanci Group

Media outlets report Sevket Sabanci, a large shareholder in the Sabanci Holding Group of Companies, and his children have decided to part ways with the Istanbul-based leading Turkish conglomerate. Nine members of the Sabanci family will sell their shares in the group, including the group's bank Akbank. Mainstream Hurriyet says the 6.97 percent fall in Akbank's shares prior to the announcement of Sevket Sabanci's decision raised questions whether the decision was known by some beforehand.

TV News:  
CNN Turk

#### Domestic News

- On Thursday, Turkey will attend an international summit on Iraqi oil to begin in Istanbul, where proposals for tenders for Iraqi oil and natural gas fields will be put forward. The two-day summit is organized by the Iraqi Oil Ministry.

- Finance Minister Kemal Unakitan will undergo bypass surgery next week in the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. Professor Murat Tuzcu, one of the leading doctors in the clinic, said the minister could start

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working again in two months.

- Deputy Prime Minister Hayati Yazici said in a press conference the AKP municipalities' distribution of aid and white goods to the poor families will continue.

- An IMF report predicts that in 2009, the world will grow 0.5 percent but Turkey will shrink 1.5 percent, saying Turkey was the only G-20 country that has not taken measures to revive its economy.

#### International News

- Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Russia will not retaliate against the planned US missile defense shield unless it is physically deployed.

- British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith's decision to prohibit Dutch film-maker Geert Wilders from broadcasting his anti-Muslim film, Fitna, in the House of Lords triggers a diplomatic row between Britain and The Netherlands.

- Lawmakers in the US House of Representatives introduced a bill to allow US nationals' unrestricted travel to Cuba.

- Muslim clerics in Sudan urge young couples to boycott Valentine's Day, saying it is a Western tradition that could lead couples astray.

JEFFREY